

Message Text

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53

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 NEA-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09

H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01

SS-15 USIA-12 GAC-01 OMB-01 SAJ-01 NIC-01 RSR-01 /125 W
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FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8793

INFO USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USCINCEUR

S E C R E T RABAT 1774

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR MO SY AG UR

SUBJECT: MOROCCAN TROOPS TO SYRIA - POSSIBLE SOVIET ASSISTANCE

1. SUMMARY. DELAY IN DEPARTURE OF MOROCCAN TROOPS TO SYRIA HAS PROBABLY RESULTED BOTH FROM FOOT- DRAGGING BY ALGERIANS OVER ARRANGEMENTS FOR TROOPS TO TRANSIT ALGERIAN TERRITORY AND ABOVE ALL LACK OF AVAILABLE TRANSPORTATION. TRANSIT PROBLEM SEEMS NOW HAVE BEEN SOLVED, WITH SOVIETS SUPPLYING TRANSPORTATION FOR MATERIEL AND POSSIBLY ALSO FOR TROOPS. END SUMMARY.

2. SINCE KING HASSAN' S ANNOUNCEMENT FEBRUARY 22 THAT MOROCCAN TROOPS TO LEAVE FOR SYRIA IN FIRST DAYS OF MARCH, GOM HAS ENCOUNTERED SERIES DIFFICULTIES IN IMPLEMENTING DECISION. AS FAR AS EMBASSY AWARE, UPWARDS THREE THOUSAND MOROCAN TROOPS REMAIN MASSED NEAR OUJDA READY TO PROCEED TO ALGERIAN PORT, REPORTEDLY ORAN.

3. ONE PROBLEM IN PAST MAY HAVE BEEN ALGERIAN FOOT- DRAGGING IN GRANTING PERMISSION FOR TROOPS TO CROSS ALGERIAN TERRITORY. BLACKOUT ON NEWS OF PROGRESS IN MOVING TROOPS AND ABSENCE OF ANY PRAISE IN PRESS FOR
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" FRATERNAL ALGERIA" IN CONNECTION WITH TROOP MOVEMENT INCLINE US TO FEEL THAT GOA- GOM COOPERATION AND COORDINATION HAS BEEN LESS THAN SMOOTH. ALGERIAN FEELING OF HAVING BEEN UPSTAGED BY KING' S DECISION AND RECENT DIFFERENCES OVER INFILTRATION OF MOROCCAN OPPOSITION ELEMENTS FROM ALGERIA PROBABLY FACTORS IN THIS. THIS DIFFICULTY SEEMS NOW OVERCOME WITH GOM NOW REPORTED TO BE COOPERATING IN MOVEMENT OF SUPPLIES TO ORAN (IR 6 865 0077 73).

4. FURTHER PROBLEM HAS BEEN FINDING SHIPS TO CARRY MEN AND EQUIPMENT TO SYRIA. WE HAVE HEARD THAT AT LEAST ONE NEUTRAL (IN ME SENSE) COUNTRY WAS APPROACHED BY GOM ABOUT SUPPLYING SHIPS, BUT DECLINED, CITING DIFFICULTY OF FINDING INSURANCE UNDERWRITING FOR SUCH RISKY VENTURE. SOURCE OF REPORT SAID POLITICAL DIFFICULTY ALSO FACTOR.

5. RECENT DAO REPORTS INDICATE THAT SOVIETS ARE HELPING WITH TRANSPORTATION OF EQUIPMENT AND MAY ALSO BE PREPARED MOVE TROOPS. ACCORDING ONE REPORT (IR 6 865 0076 73), SOVIET VESSELS HAVE ALREADY LEFT MOROCCO BOUND FOR SYRIA WITH MILITARY EQUIPMENT. PRESENCE IN ORAN APRIL 19 OF SOVIET MINISTER OF MARITIME FLEET GUZHENKO, REPORTED IN PRESS, MAY HAVE BEEN RELATED TO PREPARATIONS.

6. WE ALSO NOTE NOW WELL- DOCUMENTED PRESENCE OF 35 SOVIET FLYING PERSONNEL AT MEKNES AIR BASE (DAO IR 6 865 0075 73). ONE POSSIBLE EXPLANATION OF ARRIVAL OF SOVIET FLYING PERSONNEL IN SUCH NUMBERS IS THAT SOVIETS ARE PREPARING PROVIDE AIRLIFT TO SYRIA. TO GET EVEN A FEW HUNDRED MOROCCAN TROOPS TO FRONT COULD BE BOOST FOR KING, WHO MUST FEEL FRUSTRATED AT DELAYS.

7. THIS MESSAGE COORDINATED WITH DAO.
ROCKWELL

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